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ABSTRACT

Guidelines and competencies for the preparation of teachers in the area of mental retardation are presented by a task force appointed by the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction. The task force based its work on existing state guidelines, standards for the preparation of professional personnel available through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Council for Exceptional Children, relevant professional literature, and personal experiences. The document covers initial certification guidelines and competencies, guidelines and competencies for advanced certification, endorsement in mental retardation, and sixth year and doctoral programs. The competencies focus on content and knowledge, techniques of teaching, and professional attitudes and values. (JDD)

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CERTIFICATION

in

MENTAL RETARDATION

Guidelines and Competencies for Program Approval

Task Force on Certification in Mental Retardation

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Raleigh, North Carolina

June, 1989

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INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 1989 a task force, comprised of teachers of children with mental retardation, administrators of programs for exceptional children, college faculty members with expertise in the field of mental retardation, and members of North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction, was appointed by the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction to revise guidelines and competencies for the preparation of teachers in the area of mental retardation. Existing state guidelines and competencies, standards for the preparation of professional personnel in the field of special education available through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for Exceptional Children, and relevant professional literature as well as personal experiences of the Task Force members were used as the basis for the revision of the existing guidelines and competencies.

Comments and or suggestions are welcomed and may be addressed to Fred Baars, Consultant, Division for Services for Exceptional Children, Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, NC 27603-1712 or Dr. Eleanor B. Wright, School of Education, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 601 South College Road, Wilmington, NC 28403.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Fred Baars, Consultant
Division for Exceptional Children
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, NC

Elister Clement, Teacher
Cumberland County Schools
Fayetteville, NC

Wayne Dillon, Assistant Director
Division of Teacher Certification
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, NC

Priscilla Dudley, Certification Specialist
Division of Teacher Certification
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, NC

Quentin Griffey
Assistant Professor in Special Education
Pfeiffer College
Misenheimer, NC

Karen Guy
Coordinator of Special Education
Elizabeth City State University
Elizabeth City, NC

Peggy Holly, Teacher
Wake County Schools
Raleigh, NC

Margaret Meaney, Program Administrator
Transylvania County Schools
Brevard, NC

David Powers, Professor
Special Education Department
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC

Brenda Winston, Teacher
Wake County Schools
Raleigh, NC

Eleanor Wright, Associate Professor
School of Education
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Wilmington, NC

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GUIDELINES AND COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS
MENTAL RETARDATION

The guidelines and competencies delineated in this section for the area of Mental Retardation are intended for use in planning, implementing, and approving teacher education programs leading to North Carolina teacher certification in Mental Retardation at the initial(A) and advanced(G) levels. These guidelines and competencies complement Council for Exceptional Children and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education program standards and should be used when seeking program approval from these organizations. The program guidelines are designed to be suggestive and directional rather than prescriptive to permit flexibility and diversity in colleges and universities. The competencies provided are derived from a conceptualization of the role of a teacher of persons with mental retardation. The competencies reflect a teacher who is prepared to work with students between the ages of 5 and 21 and ranging from the mild to profound levels of mental retardation.

Guidelines and competencies are not provided for sixth year(S) and doctoral(D) level certification in mental retardation. A person completing sixth year or doctoral programs in mental retardation approved by the Council for Exceptional Children and National Association for Accreditation of Teacher Education should be granted the appropriate

certification.

The program of preparation at the initial(A) certification level of a prospective teacher of persons with mental retardation is based on the recognition that the individual is preparing to asssume the roles and responsibilities of a professional educator. To become a professional educator the prospective teacher should be challenged intellectually by a rigorous program of education and training. To provide a program in which the person may achieve high standards of performance, a teacher should (1) be liberally educated, (2) understand students' needs and how they learn, (3) have competence in the area of specialization (4) possess qualities needed to work effectively with students, their families, and with other professionals with whom they come in contact, and (5) have a disposition for continued learning as a practicing professional. Therefore teacher preparation programs at the initial certification level in Mental Retardation should be designed to provide for both the common academic and professional needs of all teachers, teachers of children with various exceptionalities, and the specialized needs of those preparing to teach persons with mental retardation. These professional needs are addressed through program components in general education, professional education, education of exceptional children, and education of persons with mental retardation.

Programs leading to advanced(G) certification should enable teachers to acquire a depth of understanding of the field of mental retardation and the ability to serve as an agent for

educational change beyond that which is expected of teachers at the initial certificaton level. Programs at these advanced levels should require extensive reading and independent study, encourage students to think independently, and provide opportunities for research. In order for teachers to obtain a depth of understanding of the field of mental retardation, it is necessary that they demonstrate the competencies required for initial certification as well as meeting those at the advanced level. Components of advanced certification programs(G) should include an indepth study in social and behavioral sciences, exceptional children, mental retardation, research, and leadership skills. Opportunities to demonstrate advanced skills including research should be provided throughout the program.

Guidelines and competencies for programs leading to initial teacher certification and additional guidelines and competencies for programs leading to advanced certification are included in the following sections. Recommendations for adding an endorsement to an existing certificate and recommendations regarding sixth year and doctoral programs follow the guidelines and competencies for initial and advanced certification.

INITIAL CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES AND COMPETENCIES

Guideline 1--There should be a program of general studies to assure that teachers in the field of mental retardation are literate, broadly educated, and cultured persons.

The General Education competencies for teachers in the field of Mental Retardation are the same as those for all undergraduate teacher education programs. They are listed in a

previous section of this document. The Guidelines given for the General Education component are applicable for teacher preparation programs in Mental Retardation.

Guideline 2--There should be a professional studies component that provides teachers in the field of mental retardation with a core of knowledge, research, theory and application in social and behavioral sciences, human growth and development, and teaching and learning theory.

Teachers prepared to teach in the field of mental retardation should demonstrate the generic professional studies competencies cited previously for all initial teacher education programs. The Guidelines applicable to the Professional Studies component are also applicable to programs in Mental Retardation with the exception of Guideline 3. This Guideline will be met through the Core Competencies in Exceptional Children in this program.

Guideline 3--The program should provide for a core of content and knowledge, professional skills and methods, and professional attitudes and values regarding the educational needs of exceptional children.

The Core Competencies(CO-A) are appropriate for all teacher preparation programs at the initial certification level in the education of exceptional children. These competencies are divided into three sections--Content and Knowledge, Techniques of Teaching, and Professional Attitudes and Values.

CONTENT AND KNOWLEDGE

CO-A1.0 The teacher should demonstrate understanding of

exceptional individuals by

1.1 Describing the concepts of "normal" vs. "exceptional"

1.2 Listing and discussing the general physical, psychological, educational and behavioral characteristics of various exceptionalities. This includes

1.2.1 Identifying and contrasting major historical and current definitions of children with special needs

1.2.2 Identifying national incidence and prevalence figures of major areas of exceptionality

1.2.3 Identifying the primary learning and behavioral characteristics of the various categories of exceptionality

1.3 Describing various etiologies of exceptionality

1.4 Describing major social, biomedical, developmental, psychological and other theories necessary for the understanding of exceptional children

1.5 Describing the impact of exceptional children on their families

1.6 Discussing the philosophical basis for the delivery of services to exceptional children

CO-A2.0 The teacher should demonstrate knowledge of historical and legal factors effecting the education of exceptional children by

2.1 Describing major current trends, attitudes, and historical forces which influence the provision of services for exceptional children

2.2 Describing federal and state legislation and rules pertaining to exceptional children

CO-A3.0 The teacher should demonstrate knowledge of the special education service delivery system by

3.1 Identifying philosophical bases for various models of service delivery

3.2 Identifying components of the service delivery system (assessment, instruction--individual and group, related services, personnel development, and administration)

3.3 Identifying levels of service commonly used in special education (from regular classroom to homebound or hospital settings)

CO-A4.0 The teacher should demonstrate an awareness of organizations and agencies serving exceptional children by

4.1 Describing public and private services for special needs of individuals of various ages

4.2 Identifying and describing major public and private agencies and organizations providing support services for exceptional children

TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING

CO-A5.0 The teacher should demonstrate skills in assessment and evaluation by

5.1 Describing the process of development as it relates to formal and informal tests

5.2 Describing relevant areas/issues related to testing

5.3 Describing differences between screening, identification, testing, assessment, and evaluation

5.4 Selecting, administering, and/or interpreting results of standardized instruments

5.5 Developing, administering, and/or interpreting results of non-standardized instruments such as criterion-referenced tests, skills continua, checklists, and observation instruments

5.6 Demonstrating ability to assume role as member of a multidisciplinary evaluation team

5.7 Using assessment information to assist with the referral process

5.8 Communicating results of assessment to pupils, parents, aides, and other professionals

5.9 Developing and using assessment information to evaluate the instructional program

5.10 Evaluating pupil performance through use of a variety of techniques

5.11 Using evaluation results in revising instructional programs

5.12 Recording assessment data

5.13 Reporting progress to students, parents, and other professionals

CO-A6.0 Teachers should demonstrate skills in instructional planning by

6.1 Identifying alternative processes for curriculum development and models of curriculum

6.2 Generating individualized education programs based on assessment of current levels of performance

6.3 Using North Carolina's Standard Course of Study, textbooks, curriculum guides, and developmental skills sequences as appropriate to specify goals and objectives

6.4 Incorporating a variety of strategies and activities including use of computers in plans

6.5 Developing plans of varying length (i.e. daily, weekly, semester)

6.6 Developing plans for instructional units

6.7 Incorporating use of computers into plans

6.8 Planning adaptations in curriculum to meet individual needs

CO-A7.0 Teachers should demonstrate skill in instruction by

7.1 Implementing individualized educational programs

7.2 Implementing instructional plans

7.3 Using and adapting a variety of instructional strategies and materials including computer software

7.4 Using various models of instruction (direct instruction, inquiry teaching, critical thinking, team teaching, cooperative learning, computer

assisted)

7.5 Using techniques to gain and maintain student's interest and attention

7.6 Assisting students in recalling previous learnings

7.7 Providing advanced organizers

7.8 Providing learning guidance

7.9 Facilitating independent practice

7.10 Assessing learnings

7.11 Providing feedback

7.12 Providing for maintenance and generalization of learnings

CO-A8.0 Teachers should demonstrate skill in structuring the learning environment by

8.1 Focusing on the strengths of each child

8.2 Modeling positive attitudes toward learning, colleagues, children and self

8.3 Organizing instructional space to accommodate individual, small and large group activities

8.4 Planning a schedule in which preferred activities are alternated with less preferred activities

8.5 Structuring the classroom to provide for optimal learning conditions (lighting, seating, barrier access, etc.)

8.6 Using computers for scheduling, grading, and record keeping

CO-A9.0 The teacher should demonstrate skill in the managment

of behavior by

9.1 Identifying the nature and sources of behaviors

9.2 Selecting and using a variety of behavioral intervention techniques appropriate for individual and group needs in a variety of situations

9.3 Recognizing impact of cultural differences on behavior

CO-A10.0 The teacher should demonstrate skill in consultation by

10.1 Communicating effectively with parents, students, aides, colleagues, administrators, and other professionals

10.2 Using standard English in written or oral communications

CO-A11.0 The teacher will demonstrate the ability to supervise aides, volunteers, and tutors in the classroom

PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND VALUES

CO-A12.0 The teacher should exhibit professionalism by

12.1 Identifying school philosophy, policies and procedures and behaving in a manner consistent with them

12.2 Demonstrating enthusiasm for and interest in teaching students and interacting with other professionals

12.3 Presenting one's own professiona knowledge, skills and experiences in an integrated manner to other professionals for specified purposes (job

interviews, resumes, supervisory activities, career status review, etc.)

12.4 Demonstrating ethical practices in all interactions including protection of confidentiality of information, respect for others, and a sense of discretion with priviledged information

CO-A13.0 The teacher should demonstrate the ability to plan for continued professional development by

13.1 Recognizing the importance of improving skills

13.2 Identifying, analyzing and using major professional organizations and other resources to improve skills

13.3 Recognizing contributing influences to professional stress and using strategies to minimize its effect

Guideline 4--The program should provide for a concentrated study of the field of mental retardation with emphasis on educating persons with mental retardation.

The competencies in Mental Retardation are designed for persons desiring to teach persons with mental retardation. This component should include a student teaching with a minimum of 10 weeks full time supervised instruction. Student teaching should be accomplished in school settings with children between the ages of 5 and 21 with severity levels from mild to profound. Additionally, programs should include opportunities for interaction with persons with mental retardation in pre-and

post-school educational settings such as developmental day care, institutions, workshops, and community colleges.

The competencies provided are divided into three sections--Content and Knowledge, Methods and Techniques, and Professional Attitudes and Values.

CONTENT AND KNOWLEDGE

MR-A1.0 The teacher should demonstrate knowledge of the field of mental retardation and persons with mental retardation by

1.1 Describing major perspectives on definition (e.g. statistical, pathological, sociological)

1.2 Identifying major current definitions of mental retardation (AAMR, North Carolina, etc.)

1.3 Discussing issues associated with the definitional process and implications for diagnosis and prognosis

1.4 Identifying major current systems for classification of mental retardation by level/degree

1.5 Discussing prevalence/incidence data and associated implications

1.6 Identifying causes of mental retardation including current systems for etiological classification and implications for prevention

1.7 Describing cognitive, social, behavioral, and psychomotor characteristics and implications associated with these characteristics from

infancy through adulthood

MR-A2.0 The teacher should demonstrate an understanding of the historical and legal bases for programming for persons with mental retardation by

2.1 Discussing key elements of relevant state and federal legislation

2.2 Describing relevant litagation and precedents established

2.3 Discussing the historical basis for current services and practices including issues such as normalization, deinstitutionalization, least restrictive environment, and transition

MR-A3.0 The teacher should demonstrate an understanding of major service delivery models/systems and program placement alternatives by

3.1 Describing continuum of services/placement options and implications associated with each placement decision

3.2 Identifying support services (e.g. occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, adaptive physical education, counseling, speech/language, and audiology)

MR-A4.0 The teacher should demonstrate an understanding of organizations and agencies providing services relevant to persons with mental retardation

4.1 Describing major professional organizations (e.g. Council for Exceptional Chilren, American Association on Mental Retardation, The

Association for the Severely Handicapped)

4.2 Identifying major stated and federal agencies (e.g. U.S. Department of Education, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina Department of Human Resources)

4.3 Discussing contributions of major service and advocacy groups (e.g. Association for Retarded Citizens/US, Knights of Columbus)

TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING

MR-A5.0 The teacher should demonstrate the ability to conduct educational assessments and evaluations of persons with mental retardation and/or use results of multidisciplinary assessments for educational planning for persons with mental retardation

by

5.1 Describing purposes and goals of assessment and evaluation

5.2 Recognizing specific legal requirements and issues in assessing persons with mental retardation

5.3 Using appropriate techniques (e.g.norm-referenced, criterion referenced, observation) to assess educational needs including but not limited to the following areas: developmental, cognitive, behavior, transition

5.4 Interpreting assessment data for placement and educational planning

5,5 Collecting and using student performance data to evaluated instructional effectiveness

5.6 Participating in evaluation of program effectiveness

MR-A6.0 The teacher should demonstrate ability to plan for educational needs of persons with mental retardation by

6.1 Developing individualized educational programs that emphasize specific needs including but not limited to the following areas: socialization, daily living skills, self-management skills, leisure, developmental)

6.2 Participating in the development of multiyear plans

6.3 Participating in the development of transition plans (e.g. preschool to school, elementary to secondary, secondary to post secondary levels,)

6.4 Planning systemmatically for maximum integration with other populations of students

6.5 Developing effective schedules (e.g. daily, weekly)

6.6 Planning the physical environment to accommodate curricular variations and individual needs

MR-A7.0 The teacher should demonstrate the ability to provide instruction based on the student's individual education program by

7.1 Selecting, designing, and modifying curricula

7.2 Organizing and maintaining a classroom (e.g. scheduling, physical environment)

7.3 Implementing classroom and community-based instructional strategies (e.g. developmental, academic, functional, behavioral, social, vocational)

7.4 Selecting, designing, and modifying instructional resources (e.g. materials, textbooks, media, community sources, software, equipment)

7.5 Selecting and utilizing appropriate technologies (e.g. computers, assistive devices)

7.6 Using instructional models found to be effective with persons with mental retardation (e.g. direction instructional, functional academics)

MR-A8.0 The teacher should demonstrate ability to manage behavior of persons with mental retardation by

8.1 Arranging antecedents to increase positive behaviors and decrease negative ones

8.2 Structuring consequences based on individual needs

8.3 Providing opportunities for students to develop adaptve behaviors

8.4 Using behavior management systems appropriate for level of individuals

MR-A9.0 The teacher should demonstrate the ability provide consultation by

9.1 Communicating with parents, administrators, teachers, students (as appropriate), and other professionals regarding identification, referral, development and implementation of individualized education programs

9.2 Working with regular education personnel to support maximum integration of students with mental retardation

9.3 Collaborating with persons in various agencies (e.g. mental health, health, social services departments)

9.4 Coordinating instructional programs with support services personnel (e.g. occupational and physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, audiologists, counselors)

MR-A10.0 The teacher should demonstrate ability to supervise classroom assistants by

10.1 Providing direction for paraprofessionals

10.2 Planning activities for volunteers and tutors

PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND VALUES

MR-A11.0 The teacher should exhibit professionalism by

11.1 Participating in organizations and agencies

11.2 Advocating for the lifelong needs of persons with mental retardation

11.3 Advocating for the needs of the field of mental

retardation

11.4 Keeping abreast of issues in the field

MR-A12.0 The teacher should value the positive contributions to society of persons with mental retardation as evidenced by

12.1 Emphasizing positive contributions of individuals

12.2 Speaking positively about persons with mental retardation

12.3 Providing opportunities for persons with mental retardation to be successful

GUIDELINES FOR ADVANCED(G) CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Guideline 1: The program should view demonstration of competencies at the initial certification level as prerequisite to advanced certification.

This guideline reflects the philosophy that an advanced certificate in mental retardation should provide a depth of understanding of the phenomenon of mental retardation, of schools, and schooling and provide the teacher with advanced skills in instructing persons with mental retardation. Demonstration of competencies at the initial certification level may be accomplished in the following ways: (1) completion of an approved program of studies with subsequent recommendation by the institution; (2) recommendation from an institution with an approved program following a review of credentials and/or observation of performance in an appropriate classroom setting by a faculty member in mental retardation; (3) recommendation from an approved program upon completion of an individualized

program of studies designed by a faculty member in mental retardation and based on previous coursework and/or experiences.

Competencies for initial certification in mental retardation are provided in the preceeding section.

Guideline 2. The program should provide for advanced study in social and beavioral sciences.

The emphasis in the program should be on providing the teacher with a theoretical framework for understanding societal and cultural influences on schools, organizational structures of schools, models of curricula, and human development and learning. An emphasis should be included on processes that enable positive changes to occur within schools as well as students.

(COMPETENCIES FOR THIS AREA NEED TO BE DEVELOPED)

Guideline 3: The program should include advanced study in the education of exceptional children.

This program component should address current research on development and learning of exceptional children and on the evaluation and current status of systems designed to meet the educational needs of exceptional children. Projected trends also should be studied and teachers encouraged to determine their prospective roles as changes occur in the field of special education.

(COMPETENCIES FOR THIS AREA NEED TO BE DEVELOPED)

Guideline 4: The program should provide an indepth study of the field of mental retardation.

This study should enable teachers to be effective decision makers and further their abilities to (a)provide educational

assessment, programming, and evaluation for individuals and groups at the classroom, school, and system levels; (b)deliver effective instruction in a variety of environments; and (c)provide consultation regarding the needs of students with mental retardation. Use of technology to assist teachers in fulfilling these roles should be included. Opportunities should be provided for teachers to refine these skills with supervision from a faculty member specializing in the field of mental retardation.

Competencies for this area are divided into three sections--Content and Knowledge, Techniqus of Teaching, and Professional Attitudes and Values. These competencies should be viewed as extending the abilities of a teacher who is initially certified.

CONTENT AND KNOWLEDGE

MR-G1.0 The teacher should demonstrate an indepth understanding of the field of mental retardation and persons with mental retardation by

- 1.1 Comparing and contrasting various theoretical positions on etiology, development, behavior, and learning
- 1.2 Analyzing perspectives on definitions and characteristics
- 1.3 Citing findings of major research studies on efficacy of interventions

MR-G2.0 The teacher should demonstrate knowledge of basis for current and future programming efforts by

- 2.1 Analyzing impact of litagation and legislation on service delivery

2.2 Projecting future trends in service delivery

2.3 Synthesizing major research findings on effective models of service delivery

Techniques of Teaching

MR-G3.0 The teacher should demonstrate ability to conduct indepth educational assessment by

3.1 Using instruments requiring advanced training (e.g. Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery)

3.2 Developing comprehensive recommendations for educational programming

3.3 Providing leadership on multidisciplinary teams

3.4 Planning and evaluating outcomes for individuals

3.5 Planning and evaluating assessment programs

MR-G4.0 The teachers should demonstrate the ability to plan programs by

4.1 Planning in-service programs at the school level

4.2 Participating in program development at the system level

MR-G5.0 The teacher should demonstrate ability to provide instructional leadership by

5.1 Critiquing new instructional techniques

5.2 Incorporating effective techniques in instructional program

5.3 Demonstrating use of effective techniques to others

5.4 Conducting action research

MR-G6.0 The teacher should demonstrate skills in behavior management by

6.1 Analyzing current research on techniques

6.2 Designing and evaluating behavior management programs for imnplementation by others

6.3 Conducting research on effectiveness of various types of programs

MR-G7.0 The teacher should demonstrate consultation skills by

7.1 Serving as a leader on building based and system wide teams

7.2 Providing parent training

7.3 Working with teachers and related services personnel to enhance student's educational programs

MR-G8.0 The teacher should demonstrate skill in supervision by

8.1 Mentoring beginning teachers

8.2 Supervising student teachers

8.3 Providing training for aides, volunteers, and tutors

PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND VALUES

MR-G9.0 The teacher should demonstrate professionalism by

9.1 Providing leadership in professional organizations

9.2 Demonstrating enthusiasm in performance of duties

9.3 Assuming leadership roles in the school

MR-G10.0 The teacher should demonstrate the value of the profession of teaching persons with mental retardation by

10.1 Maintaining a positive attitude toward their students and themselves

10.2 Seeking ways to minimize stress

10.3 Interacting in a positive manner

Guideline 5: The program should include a significant study of research as applied to the fields of education, special education, and mental retardation.

This study should include an understanding of basic concepts in research, various research designs commonly used in education and mental retardation, the ability to critique and use research findings, and opportunities to develop and conduct research studies applicable to the education of persons with mental retardation. Use of computers to facilitate research should be included. Seminars and presentations of research studies should be emphasized.

Guideline 6: The program should provide for development of leadership skills in the field of mental retardation.

Opportunities to develop leadership skills including consultation, mentoring, supervision of student teachers, planning and conducting inservice training, and grant writing should be included in an advanced program in the field of mental retardation. Arrangements between local education agencies and institutions of higher education should be made to facilitate teachers' acquisisiton of these skills.

ENDORSEMENT IN MENTAL RETARDATION

A teacher wishing to add certification in mental retardation to an existing A certificate should meet the same competencies as those seeking initial certification in mental retardation. These competencies may be met by completion of an approved program of studies in Mental Retardation with subsequent recommendation by the institution; recommendation

from an institution with an approved program following a review of credentials and/or observation of performance in an appropriate classroom setting by a faculty member in mental retardation; or recommendation from an approved program upon completion of an individualized program of studies designed by a faculty member in mental retardation and based on previous coursework and/or experiences.

At a minimum a teacher should have coursework in characteristics of exceptional children and coursework specifically related to mental retardation in the following areas: characteristics of mental retardation, assessment planning, instruction, behavior management, and consultation. Courses may be specific to mental retardation or generic with some portions of the coursework related to mental retardation. A ten week full-time supervised practicum or equivalent experiences approved by the recommending institution should be completed.

SIXTH YEAR AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Sixth year programs should be characterize by components that provide teachers with advanced leadership skills in program and curriculum development, and/or supervision and administration of educational programs for persons with mental retardation as well as increased depth of understanding of their education, and the ability to conduct research at classroom, school and system levels.

The major characteristic of doctoral preparation in mental retardation shouuld be the emphasis on generation of research

in the field. Persons prepared at the doctoral level should have opportunity to develop and/or refine skills in progrm administration, supervision, instruction and college teaching as well as research.